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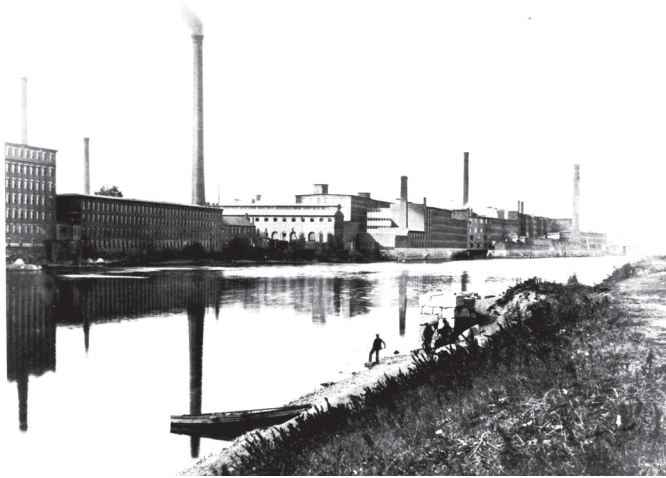
MAJOR DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

After a flurry of new construction during the days of urban renewal in the 70s, Lowell has gone through a couple of decades with very little new construction. Many existing mill structures were fitted out and innumerable historic facades were rehabilitated since the nineteen seventies. However it was not until the past decade that major riverfront developments were initiated, including the Paul E. Tsongas Arena and LaLacheur Park as well as the Riverwalk that followed.

Downtown Lowell is far from being built out. Numerous historic structures remain vacant, underutilized, or incomplete. There are often many problems and constraints with these leftovers and the City of Lowell and the Lowell Historic Board should continue to aggressively help developers to solve these difficult development projects.

As for providing sites for new construction, there are currently no unused parcels in the downtown. However a number of underutilized parcels do exist, including one that is occupied by an industrial use and several surface parking lots. In addition, there are some parcels strategically located that currently accomodate a one story suburban-type structure surrounded by a sea of parking.

It is these underutilized sites which should be the focus of development attention in the near future. For the most part the older historic structures can only accomodate residential or office uses because of structural and accessibility issues. Therefore, new development should address the need for parking, larger retail, and uses with special mechanical and adjacency requirements.



Lowell's Mile of Mills

Urban Waterfronts

Most cities of the world grew on the edges of some water feature like an ocean or a river. Until recently, waterbodies were the major means of transit and accessibility.

Lowell was no exception. Like many cities it augmented its river with a system of canals.

However unlike most cities whose waterfront served as a dock for goods to and from the rest of the world and the added canals as a transportation link, the main function of the Merrimack and Concord rivers was to perform as a link in the extensive system of canals that provided power for manufacturing.

By the 1800s, there was a "Mile of Mills" along the Merrimack River, additional mills on the Concord River and the Pawtucket Canal. By 1850, these water-powered mills employed 10,000 people and gained Lowell status as a major world producer of textiles.

And like many cities these initial industrial uses became obsolete. In the 1950s, a significant number of mills in the downtown closed their doors. A few remained until recent years.

Today, industrial and transportation uses have a diminished presence, or none at all, on the waterfronts of most cities. Cities are transforming these areas to accommodate current day uses and activities.

Today's Riverwalk



Revitalizing Obsolete Waterfronts

A number of cities have undertaken major redevelopment efforts to transform their waterfronts into exciting places to meet modern needs. London is just finishing Britain's largest urban renewal plan in its London Docklands; Hamburg is outfitting its historic warehouses with high tech businesses; and Bilbao, Spain has become an overnite tourist destination with the construction of the dramatic Guggenheim Museum of Art on a former shipyard on the Nervion River. Each of these projects rescued an obsolete waterfront and adapted it to contemporary living, working, and play.

Cities in the United States have been undergoing the same transformation of the urban waterfront.

On our west coast, projects span from San Diego's Seaport Village to Seattle's Bell Street Pier and include specialty shopping, aquariums, restaurants, conference centers and museums.

Chicago has located its major family entertainment center on the Navy Pier while San Antonio has integrated an upscale mall into its river and canal system.

Here on the east coast, festive market places thrive from Miami's Bayside to NYC's South Street Seaport. The Cheaseapeake Canal in Georgetown DC is lined with upscale shops and offices while Boston's Fort Point Channel has long been attracting visitors with its colorful waterfront atmosphere and activities.

Philadelphia is planning to convert its Penn's Landing to an entertainment center. NYC has just completed Battery Park City, a dramatic new mixed use development on filled land overlooking the Hudson River. Shoppers in Providence Place, RI overlook the Woonasquatucket River and its new waterfront park.

Baltimore



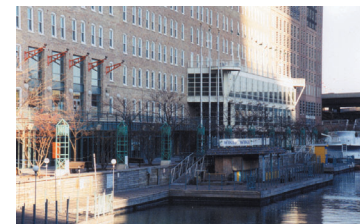
Miami



New York City



Chicago



Boston



DOWNTOWN LOWELL MASTER PLAN

Figure 6.1: Major Development Concepts

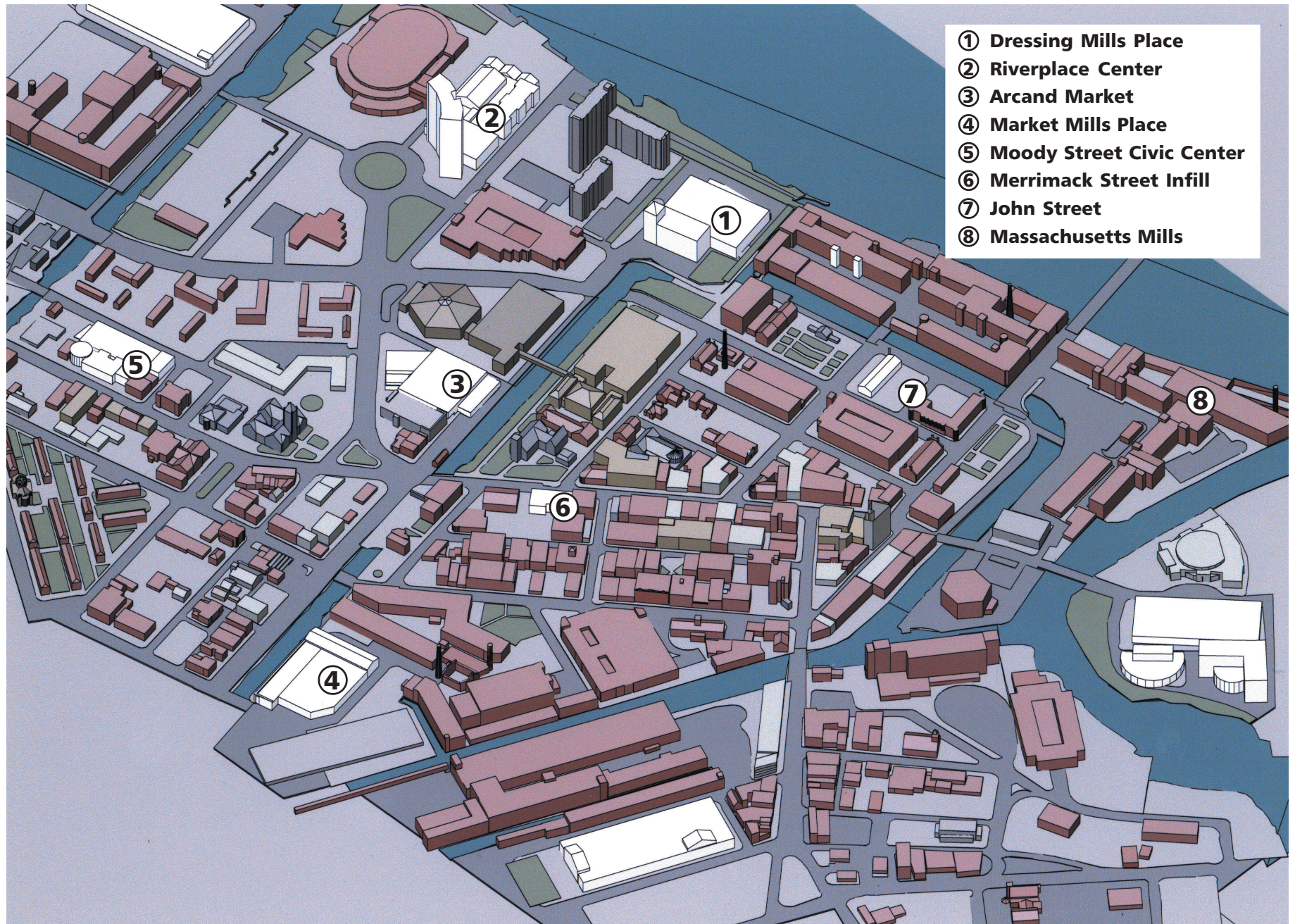


Table 6.1: Current Site Data - Major Development Concepts

Project	Historic Context	Development Goals		
Dressing Mills	Dressing Mills of	To provide an urban waterfront environment for civic and retail activities		
Place	Merrimack Manufacturing Mills	To provide additional parking to support the development of the Boott Cotton Mills		
Parcel Address	Current Owner	Land Area (Sq. Ft.)	Assessed Value	Land Use
115 River Place	Princeton Properties	226,426	\$17,050,000	186,520 sq. ft. of residential apartments, office space and 160 parking spaces
1 Merrimack Place	Fred C. Church	77,034	\$69,300	Office Building & 160 Parking Spaces
2 French Street	Fred C. Church	495	\$1,200	Parking
14 French Street	Fred C. Church	5,223	\$52,400	40 spaces for Church/ High-school
1 Anne Street	Fred C. Church	5,233	\$23,100	Parking
14.1 French Street	Boott Cotton Mills, LLC	6,158	\$700	Canal Trail
Riverplace Center	Printing Dept. of	To provide living and/or recreational activities along the river		
	Merrimack Manufacturing			
3 Tilden Street	Frank E. Barrett	4,678	\$15,300	Parking
164 Tilden Street	City of Lowell	1.3 AC		Post Office
Arcand Market	Merrimack Manufacturing	To provide an urban supermarket for residents		
	Boarding House			
35 Arcand Drive	Lowell Masonic Assoc.	7,078	66,900	Temple Parking
75 Arcand Drive	Trs. Lowell Doctors Park Realty Trust	62,291	\$690,600	Medical Offices and Parking
79 Dutton Street	Lowell Masonic Assoc.	25,700	\$1,571,100	Temple
Market Mills Place	Brussels Complex and machine Shop	To provide shopping options for museums attendees and tourists		
256 Dutton Street	NPS	15,827	\$114,900	National Park Service
Moody Street Civic Center	Commercial Structures	To provide an enhanced and expanded Civic Center		
441 Merrimack Street	Majestic Realty Assoc.	6,156	\$770,500	Apartments
445 Merrimack Street	City of Lowell	2,690	\$5,100	Parking
463 Merrimack Street	Trs.KC Realty Trust	5,100	\$417,000	Apartments
489 Merrimack Street	Tran Realty Corp.	2,731	\$171,000	Drive- in bank
521 Merrimack Street	521 Merrimack St. Realty Trust	3,232	\$106,200	Flower Shop
555 Merrimack Street	Louis Saab	22,360	\$388,800	Retail/ Health Center
154 Moody Street	City of Lowell	7,857	\$50,400	Parking
168 Moody Street	City of Lowell	18,924	\$82,800	Parking
200 Moody Street	Wm. A. LaBranche	4,052	\$80,300	Parking
200.1 Moody Street	City of Lowell	130	\$2,200	Parking
240 Moody Street	City of Lowell	2,086	\$5,100	House
Merrimack Street Infill	Commercial Structures	To provide retail infill on a main pedestrian route		
190 Merrimack Street	Enterprise Bank Corp.	3,500	\$47,000	Parking
198 Merrimack Street	US of America 1st hold trust	3,500	\$40,800	Parking
210 Merrimack Street	US of America 1st hold trust	3,500	\$40,800	Parking
147 Middle Street	TRS Merrimack Realty Trust	3,212	\$55,600	
155 Middle Street	TRS Merrimack Realty Trust	,297	\$32,800	Coffee Mill
173 Middle Street	TRS 18 Shattuck Realty Trust	5,697	\$333,900	Office building
2 City Hall Ave.	TRS Merrimack Realty Trust	1,800	\$19,200	
John Street	Boott Mills Boarding Houses	To provide retail infill on a main pedestrian route		
74 French St.	United States of America	12,324		Boott Mills Parking
86 French Street	United States of America	12,192		Boott Mills Parking



Dressing Mills in 1890



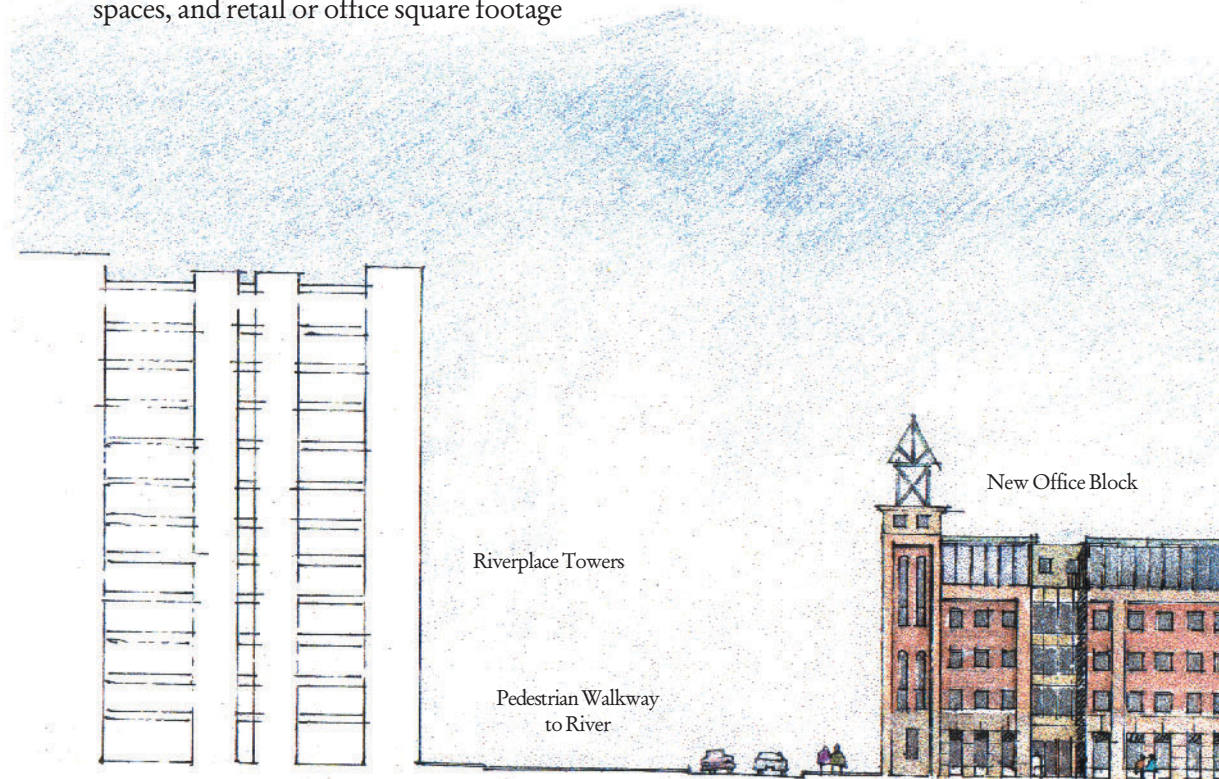
Princeton Lot Today

Dressing Mills Place

Probably the most critical parcel to link the Merrimack River with downtown is the waterfront parcel owned by Princeton Properties and used as parking for the tenants at Riverplace Towers.

A few years back a proposal to accommodate tenant parking demands at the Boott Cotton Mills was drawn up as an air rights garage over the existing lot. Although parking for the apartments is essential and Boott Mills is reaching the point where additional parking must be secured, it is not appropriate to build just a garage on this valuable waterfront property. Therefore we must think in terms of finding other suitable parking locations or combining retail and /or public cultural/recreational uses into the garage.

Several approaches and/or combinations are possible with more or less acreage, parking spaces, and retail or office square footage

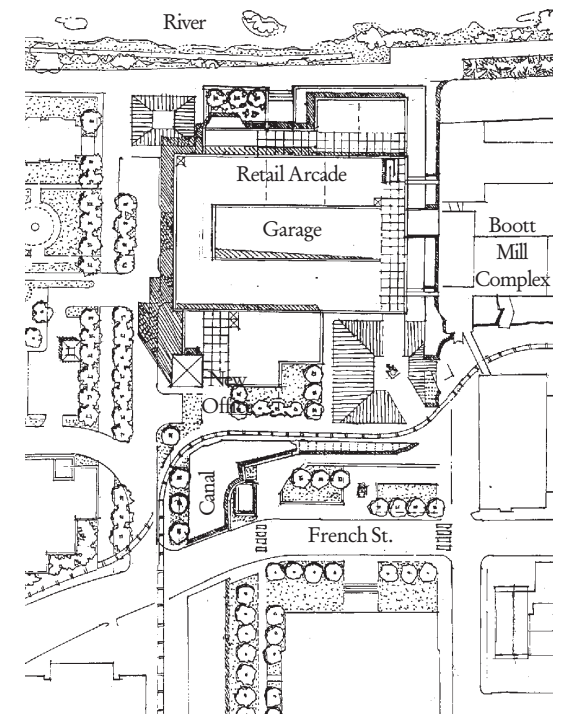


Elevation of Garage with New Office Facility on Church Parcel.

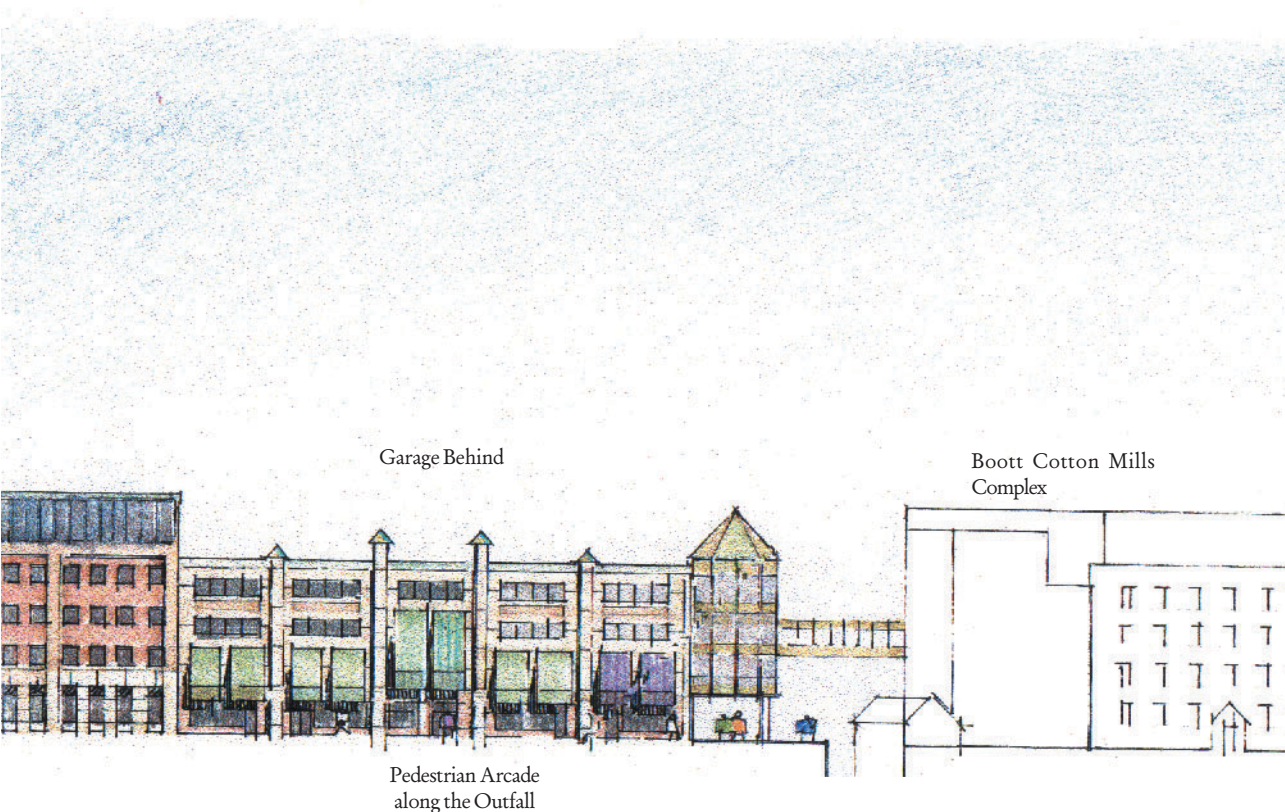
The scheme depicted here shows a 600 car parking garage built to the back edge of the Princeton lot enclosed by glass shopping gallerias on the Outfall and Riverwalk edges with thirty thousand square feet ground floor retail. There would be direct pedestrian and truck connection to the Boott Cotton Mills complex and a glass enclosed health club on the roof.

To facilitate this approach some of the Riverplace parking is accommodated on a two level deck created by removing fill from the existing lot on the Southeast corner and the Fred C. Church parcel is trimmed on the east edge for the pedestrian link and on the west side for a realligned access road.

This scheme could also accommodate a new office block on the Church parcel and a park on their French Street parking lot in the future.



Plan of Dressing Mills Place



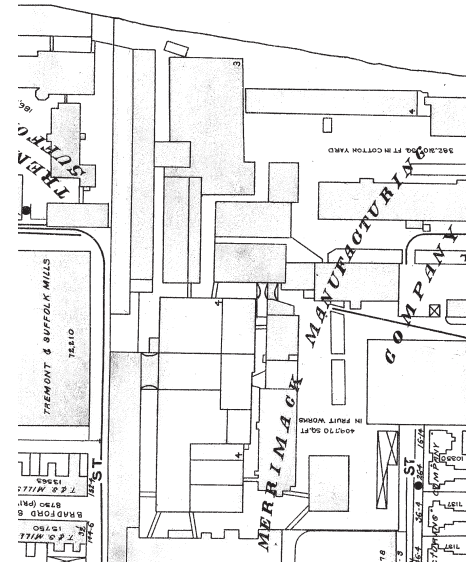


Dressing Mills Garage proposal as viewed from the Merrimack River

Riverplace Center

The existing Tsongas Arena was originally conceived of as a part of a complex of buildings. The new post office was completed together with the new access road but the remaining parts were put on hold. Today the city has available a site to the east of the Arena at the river's edge.

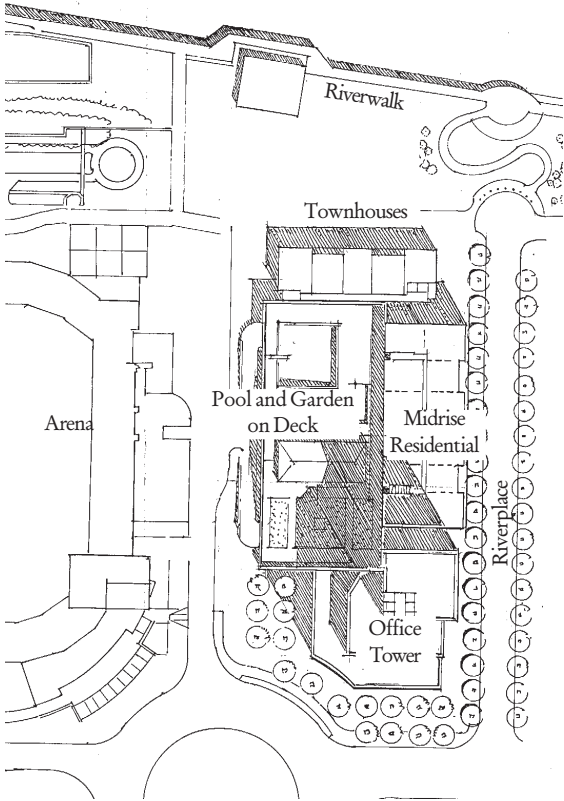
At the time of the arena's programming it was anticipated that there would be a smaller youth hockey rink attached to it. After its completion there was some discussion of doing studies for a convention hotel attached to the Arena with supporting and shared roles. From one of the CAC meetings came a suggestion for a commercial recreational complex such as that of Chelsea Piers in NYC or the Rexpex in Elizabeth N.J.



Post Office Square in 1870

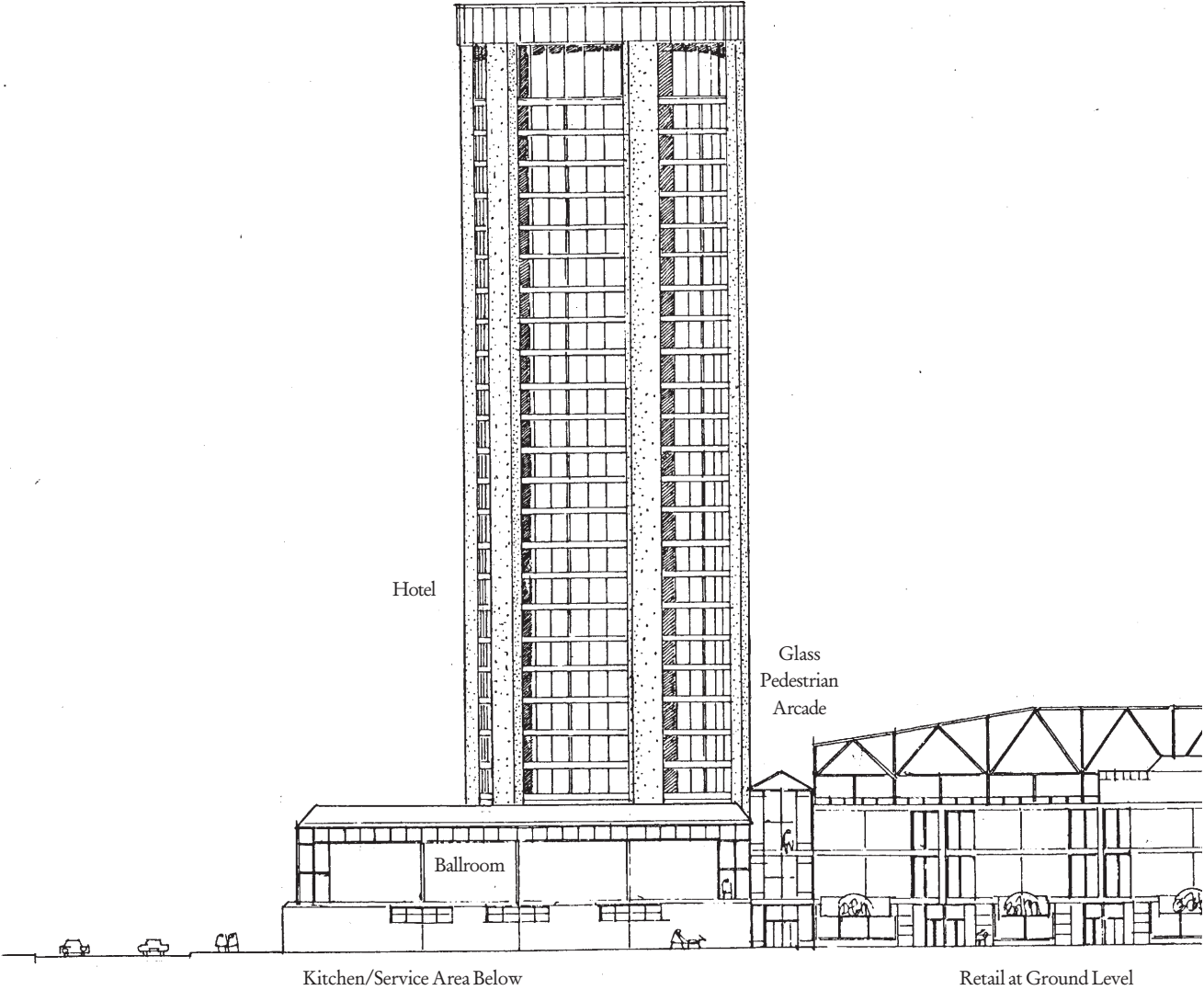


Post Office Square as viewed from the Ayotte Parking Garage



Mixed use plan with office tower, residential, and retail

Any of the various development alternatives that would work here should include a strong public and/or retail presence. The edge along the Riverplace should be an active and lively street and function as a major pedestrian connection to the River. Any use along the Merrimack River edge should be a use and of a scale compatible with the Riverwalk.



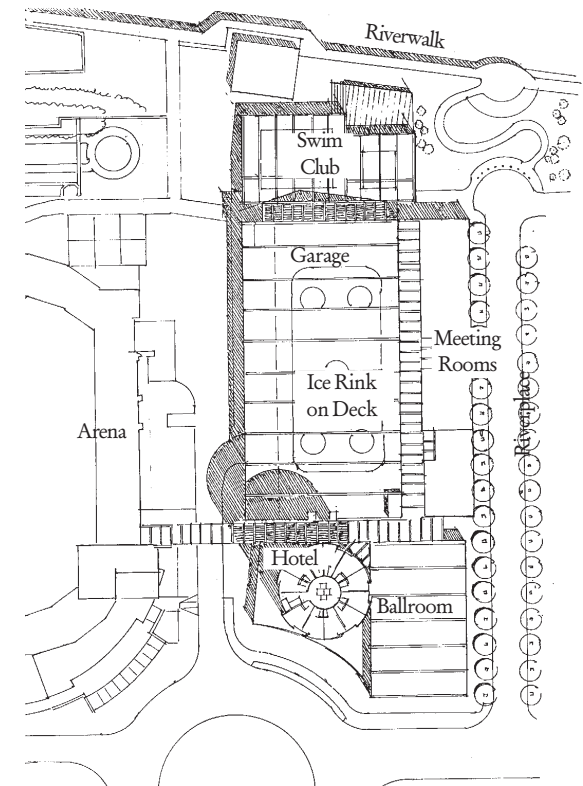
Elevation of new hotel, meeting rooms, and pool from Riverplace

One scenario shown here includes an office building fronting on Arcand Circle, and apartments along Riverplace with ground floor retail and townhouses facing the Riverwalk. The Garage would be accessed from Tilden Street and would have a garden and pool club on the deck.

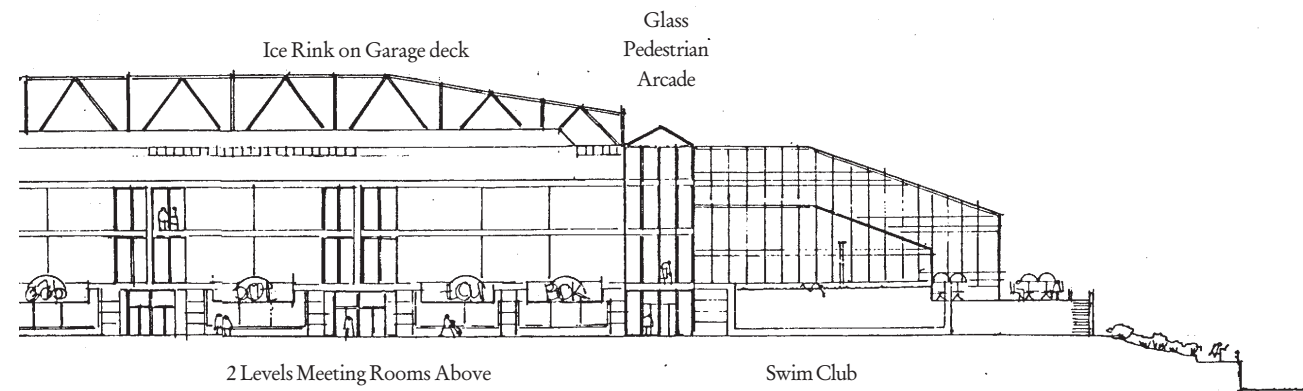
Another scenario presented on this page shows a convention hotel with a direct connection to the existing Arena. It was determined that if the Convention hotel were to make use of the existing Arena space it would be necessary to build the planned practice rink which we have located on the parking garage deck. Around the perimeter of the garage would be an interior glass arcade street which would link the hotel with its auxiliary ballroom, meeting rooms, retail, and pool.

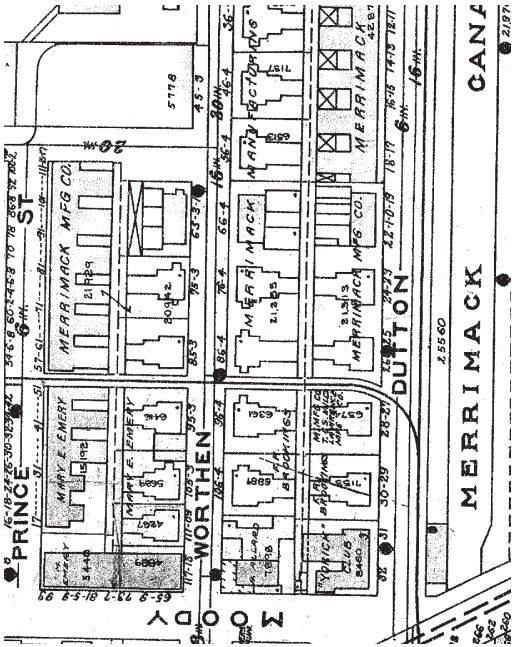
Riverplace would be lined with shops at street level with two levels of meeting rooms above and the pool club would overlook the Riverwalk.

Although not explored here, alternate scenarios could promote this location as a site for the consolidation of Lowell various court facilities.



Plan with new Convention Hotel





75 Arcand in 1910

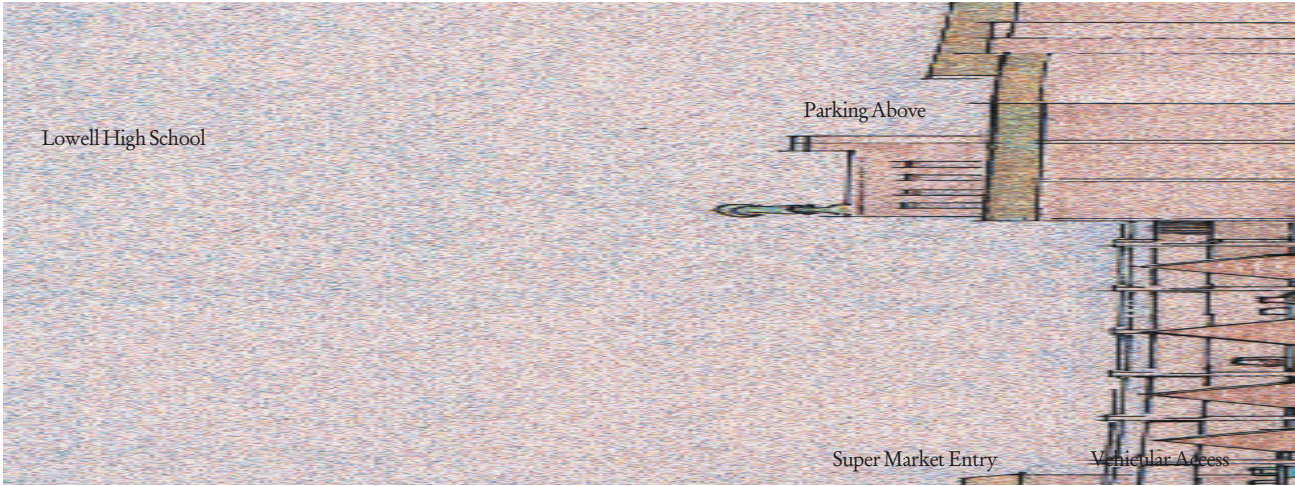


75 Arcand Drive today

Arcand Market Place

Downtown Lowell is home to many residents who live in rehabbed mills and former commercial structures, the Riverplace Towers, UMass Lowell dorms and the North Canal and South Common projects. Currently it is a very high priority of the city and this study to provide options for and attract many more residents in the future. The existing shopping needs of families are currently provided for by the Market Basket supermarket located in the Acre Neighborhood, the Shop & Save on Plain Street, or even further out toward the highway.

It would certainly make life easier and provide a better sense of neighborhood to have an urban supermarket that focused on the needs of downtown residents and might even serve as an enticement to draw residents of other areas to shop in Downtown Lowell.



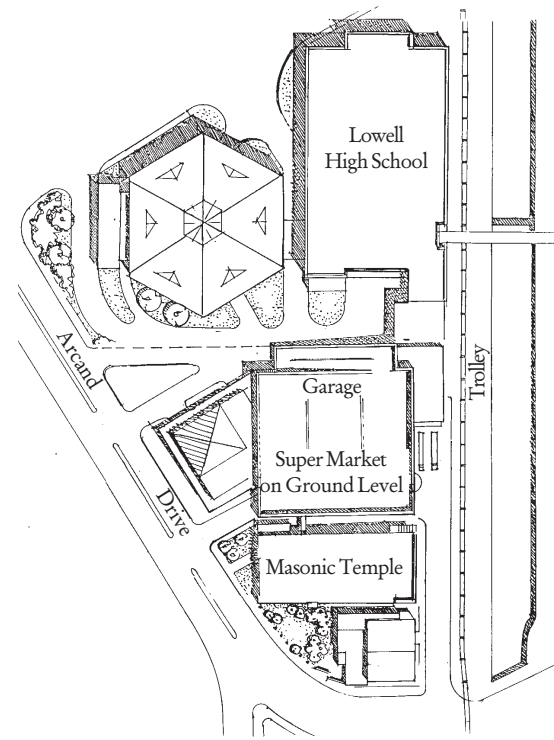
Elevation of Market Place from Arcand Drive

The site that we are currently focusing on is 75 Arcand Drive which is the geographical center of downtown Lowell residences. Today the site is owned and used by a professional medical group. A low rise block sits on the site surrounded by its parking lot which is an unsuitable building typology for the center city.

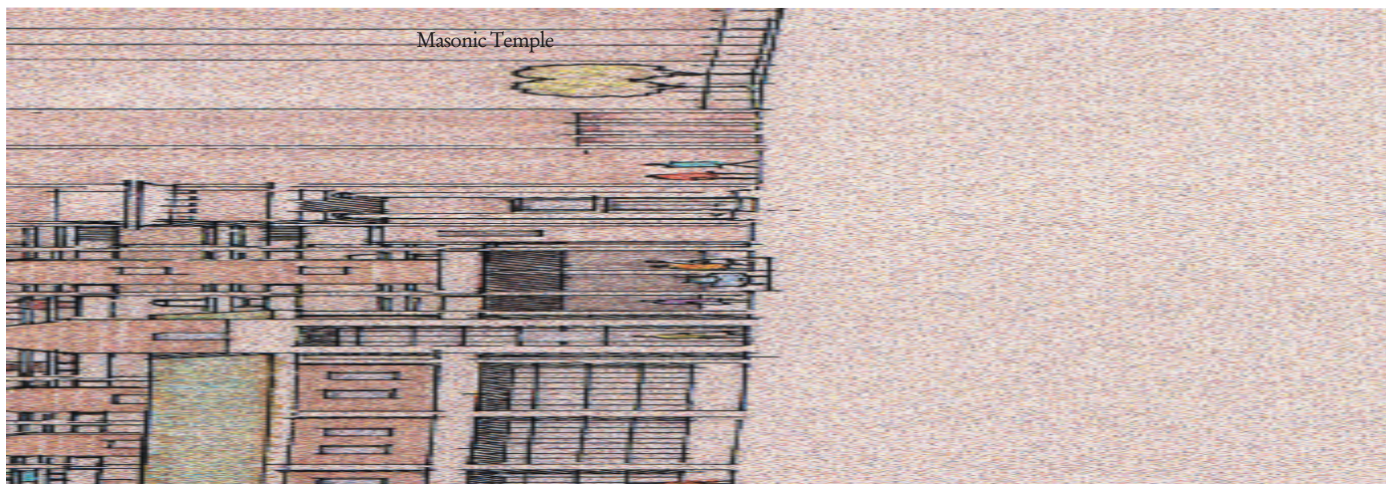
Solidifying the street edge with a new and vibrant use like a supermarket would also serve to fill the gap that exists on Arcand Drive between downtown Lowell and the Tsongas Arena. Pedestrians would now cut through the new connecting road and a pedestrianized Dutton Street to connect from Arcand to Merrimack.

All of the parking needs of the supermarket, the Masonic Lodge, and Cobblestones would be provided in structured parking decks over the 30,000 sq. ft. market.

An added bonus might be if this current and viable use could shift to one of our planned historic infill developments on John or Merrimack Street.



Plan of Arcand Market



Supermarket Entry at University Park in Cambridge, MA.

Moody Street Civic Center

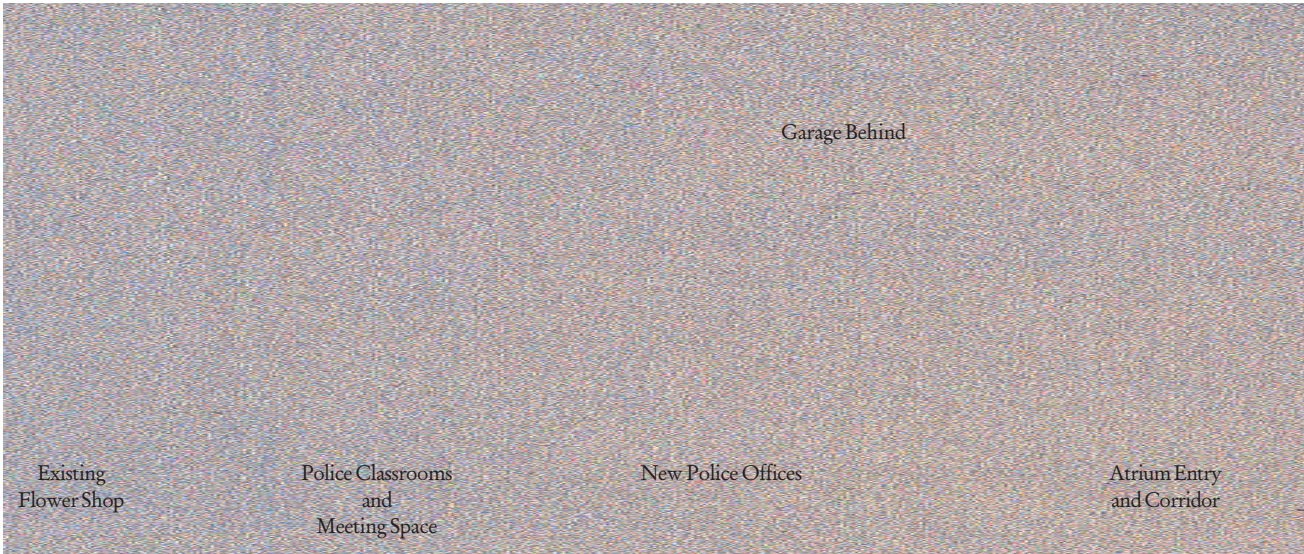
Recently some inadequacies have been evolving with the facilities at City Hall and the JFK Civic Center. The 1893 City Hall is a remarkable Romanesque Building and the JFK Civic Center by Gruen and Associates offered an efficient addition of specialized space needs for the 1970s.

However since then programs and purposes have changed and evolved. New equipment and technologies have been inserted into everyday activities. The mechanical systems in both buildings are inefficient by today’s standards. Maintenance of these has been insufficient.

The police department, with many new programs, is in need of additional space, while the fire department is searching for adequate garage space for some of their new equipment. Archival and record storage for all city departments is scattered and chaotic. Parking spots for city employees are insufficient and remote.



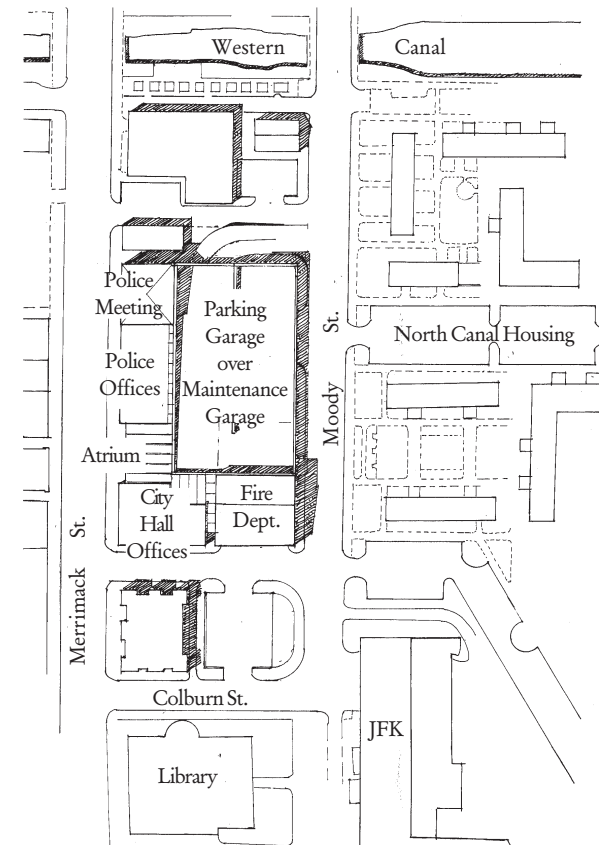
Moody Street Today



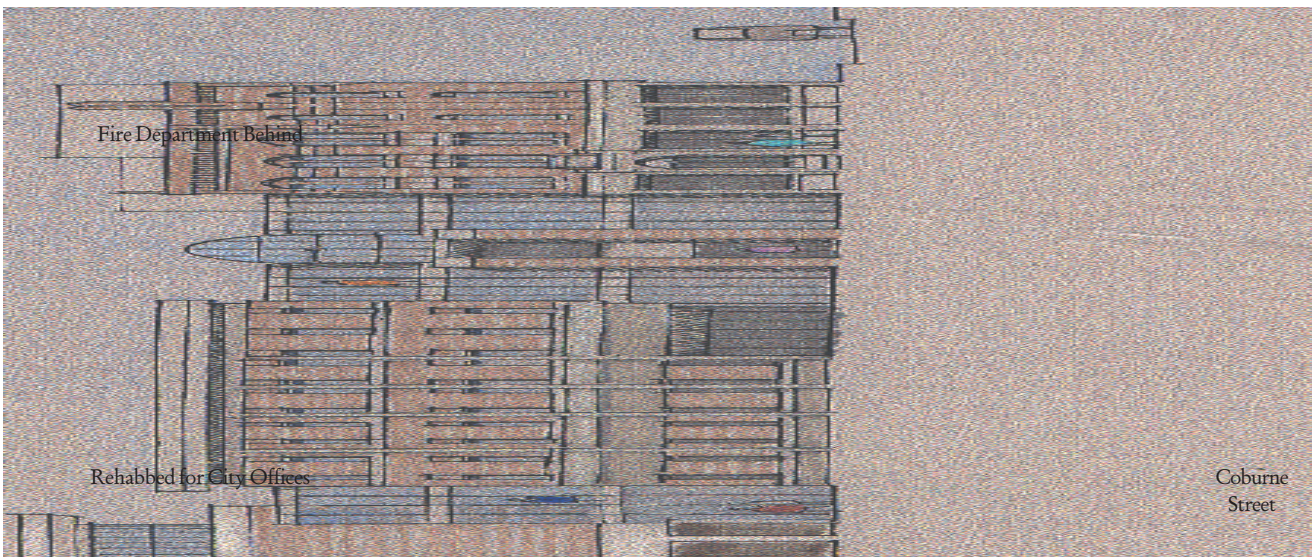
Elevation of new City Hall expansion from Merrimack Street

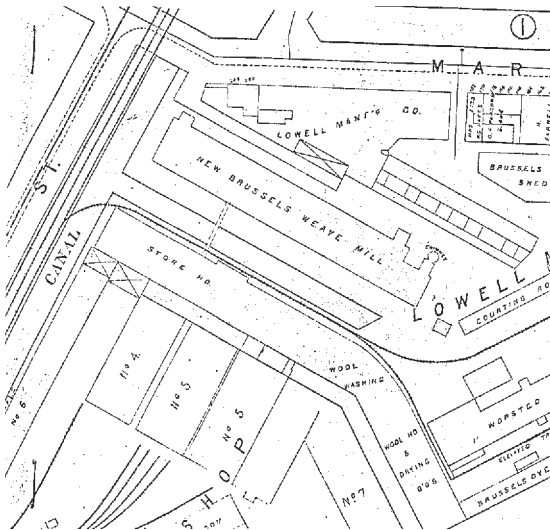
The scheme depicted here shows an expanded civic center on 168 Moody Street which is currently city surface parking, the back yard surface parking of 555 Merrimack, and the drive in bank at 489 Merrimack Street. The scheme would incorporate storage space for police and fire vehicles with structured parking above for city employees and other block users, additional city office space, and a grand public reception foyer facing Merrimack Street at #489.

This would be done in conjunction with a thorough programming, space, structural, and mechanical analysis at the existing City Hall structures and the exterior plaza as well, with a total rehabilitation and upgrading. This scheme would also utilize the Smith Baker center for additional municipal administrative space.



Plan of New Civic Center





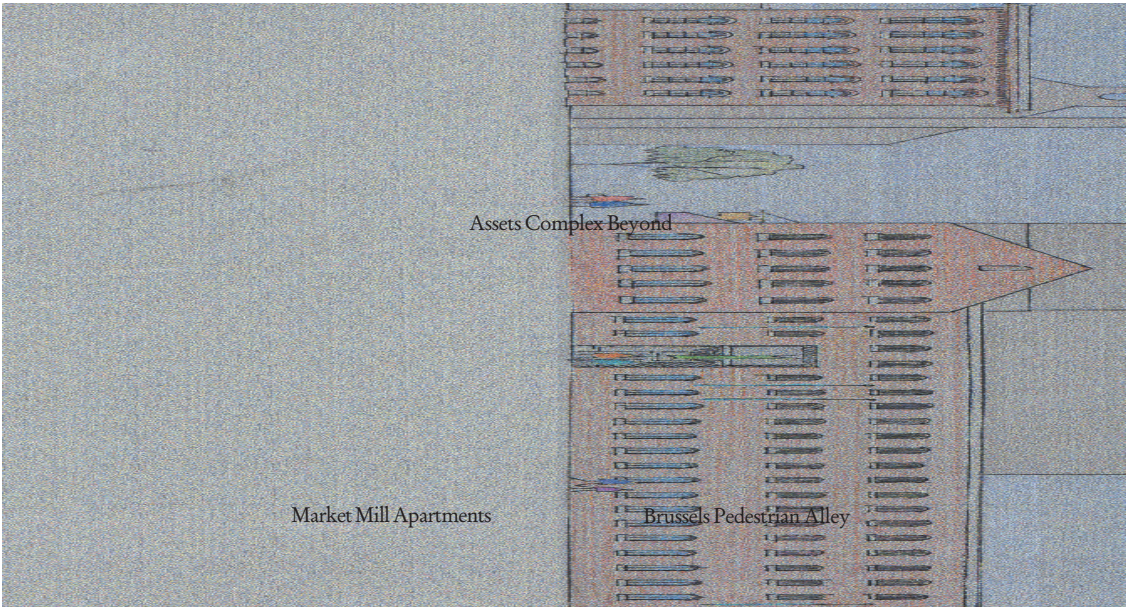
265 Dutton in 1896

265 Dutton Today



Market Mills Place

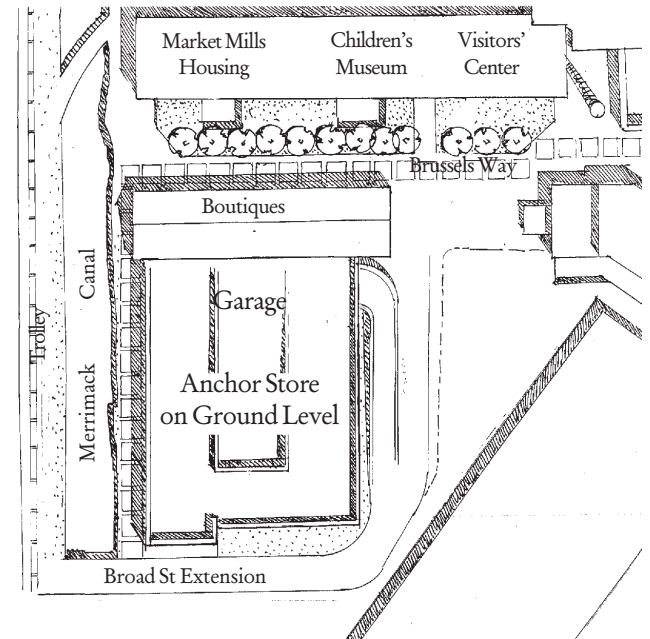
Lowell has a wealth of museum and cultural attractions to offer from the extensive network of canals and mills, including the New England Quilt Museum, the American Textile History Museum, the Tsongas Arena and the Lowell Memorial Auditorium. A new Lowell Childrens Museum and a Trolley Museum are being planned. Although visitors flock to all of these attractions, there are few shopping opportunities to enhance their trip. Most successful tourism sites offer this amenity or have retail and restaurant uses nearby.



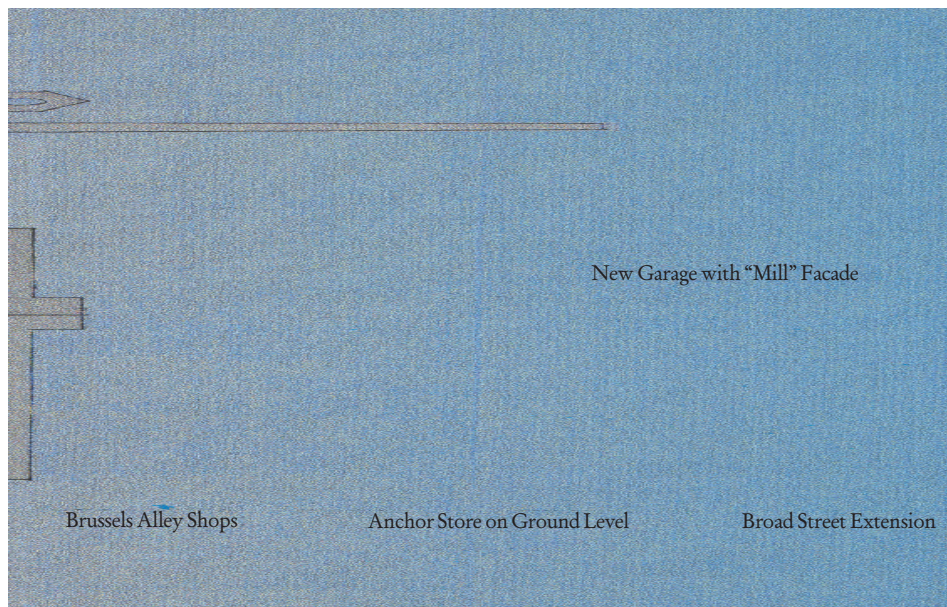
Elevation of Museum Square from Dutton Street

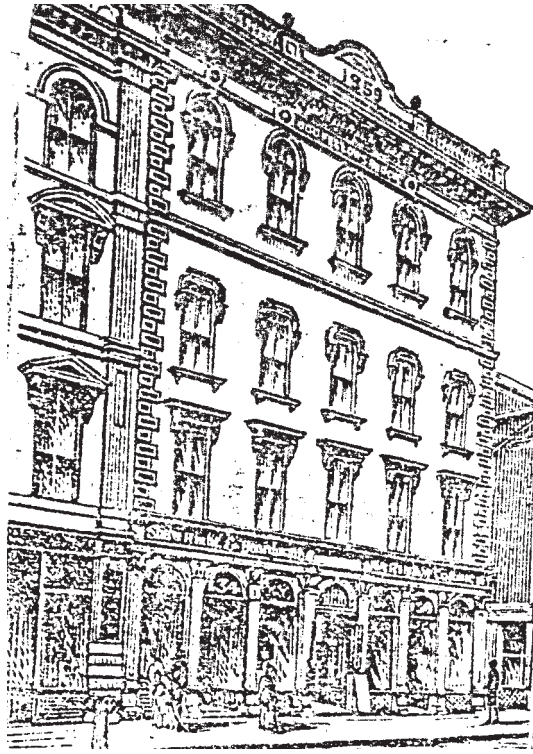
The National Park currently utilizes the 58,775 sq. ft. Dutton Street lot as surface parking for 135 vehicles for their visitors and employees. There are no extra spots here for the proposed new developments on adjacent parcels such as Canal Place III, the Assets Project, or even overflow from a busy day at the Children's Museum.

In this scenario we are depicting a 600 vehicle parking structure over sixty thousand sq. ft. of commercial space on the first level which could accommodate larger retail stores oriented to the interests of the attendees of the surrounding museums such as kids toys and clothes, craft and textile supplies, museum and gallery shops, home accessories etc.



Plan of Museum Square





Merrimack Street in the 1850s



200 Merrimack today

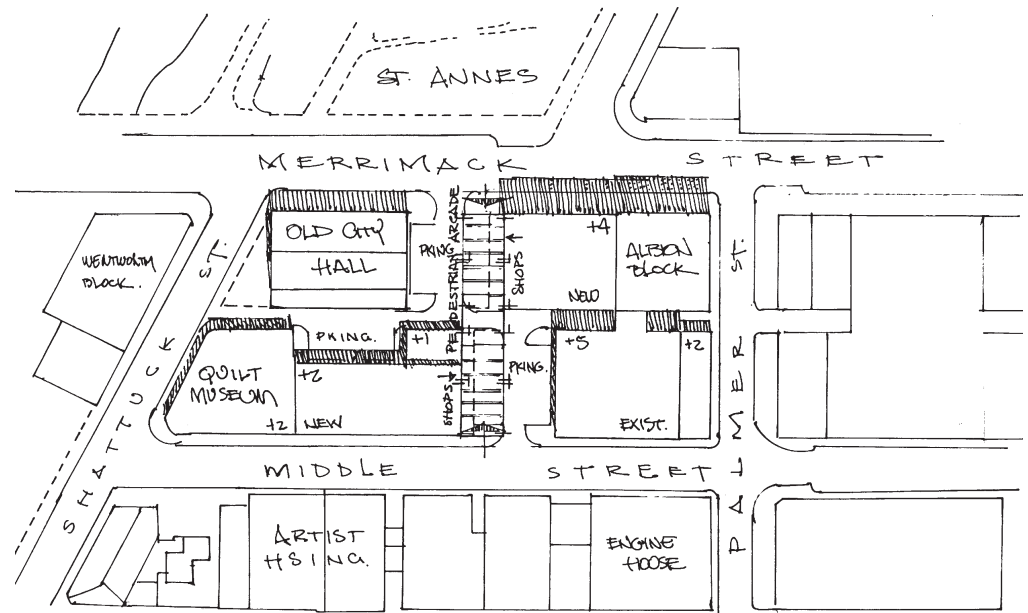
Merrimack Street Infill

There are a couple of surface parking lots on sections of Merrimack which should function as major pedestrian paths. One is a 13,320 sq. ft. parcel at 520 Merrimack. The other is a 10,500 sq. ft. parcel at 190-210 Merrimack which provides 112 parking spaces for the Enterprise Bank. This vacant lot breaks up the street edge, creating a “dead zone” of activity, precisely at the center of downtown Lowell’s high end retail cluster. It would be preferable to locate this parking on more minor thoroughfares or in the public garages.

A new infill commercial structure is envisioned at 200 Merrimack with ground floor retail that would reflect the surrounding architectural context and texture.

Any loss of spaces could be accommodated at the proposed Arcand Drive Garage. Below is a possible configuration of an infill project.

Until alternative parking could be provided at 520 Merrimack a landscaped architectural edge could be provided at the front of the existing lot.



Plan of 200 Merrimack Street Infill

John Street

The 24,516 sq. ft. lot in front of the Boott Cotton Mills between French and Amory is currently owned the Boott Cotton Mills and accomodates the parking needs of their office tenants. However this 120-space lot is not sufficient to accomodate any projected new tenants. It would be more appropriate to place all of the Boott parking demand in the proposed garage on the parcel on their western edge.

John Street has also been identified as a critical pedestrian connection between the Downtown Core to the Riverfront. Therefore, its edge should be reinforced with public or commercial uses which could attract and generate pedestrians.

The Preservation Plan for the Eastern Canal District proposed a three story boarding house structure that echoed the existing boarding house on the west edge of the park, with surface parking behind.

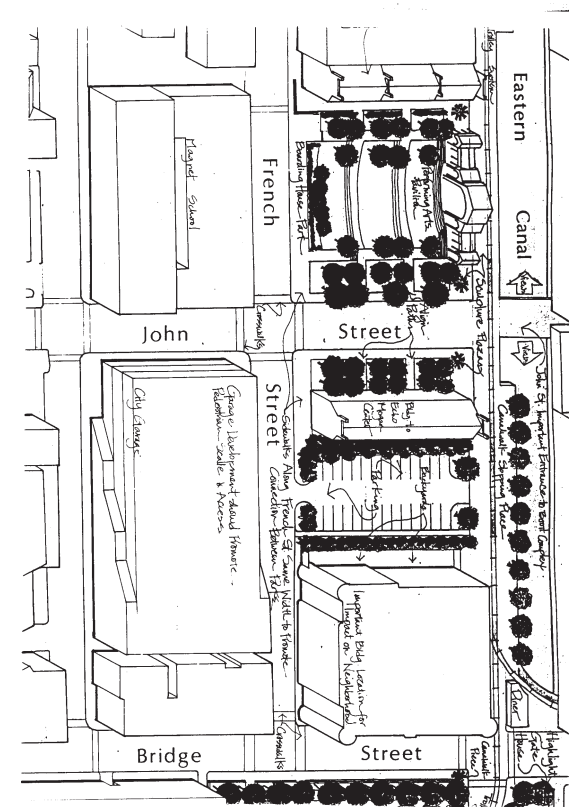
This would frame the Boarding House Park and provide the active link into the downtown.



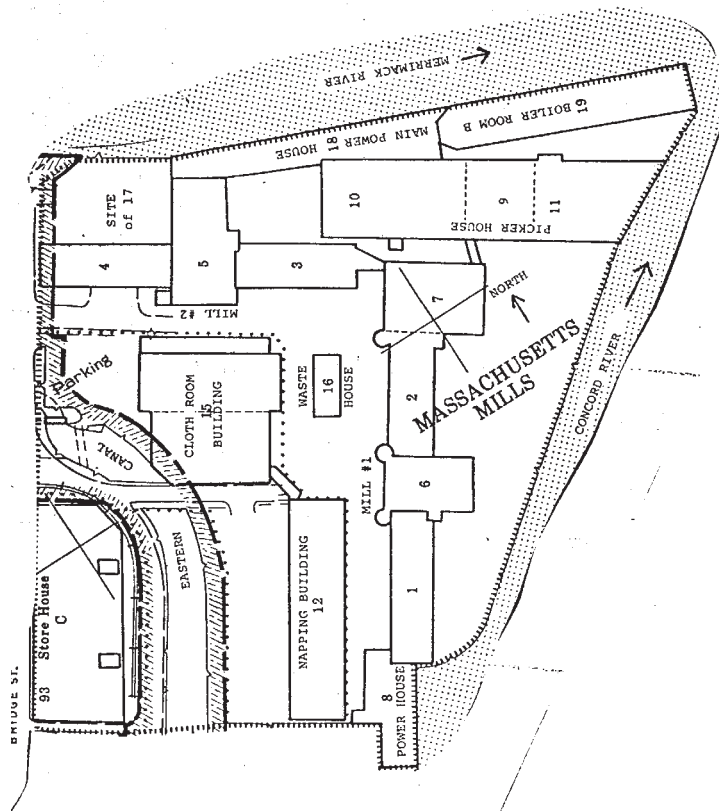
Boarding Houses to the West of the Park.



74-86 French Street Today



Preservation Plan for development



Massachusetts Mills in 1870



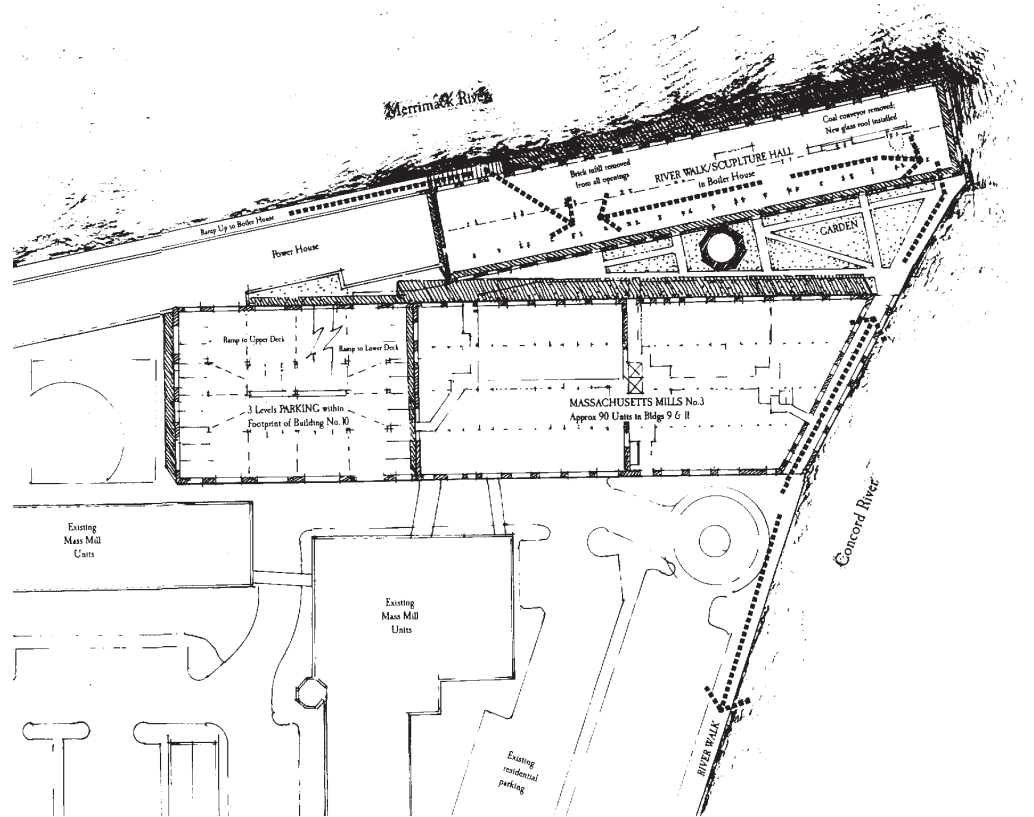
Picker House & Boiler House today

Massachusetts Mills Completion

Massachusetts Mills is one of Lowell's best historic renovation success stories. The former 1839 cotton mill was developed in 1989 into 280 apartments with help from the Massachusetts *SHARP* program.

Currently there are two remaining buildings of 200,000 and 40,000 sq. ft. respectively.

After considering both the condition of the buildings and the need to provide parking, the schematic indicated here shows 90 units in the #9 & #11 sections of the Picker's House with parking provided on the site of #10. The shell of the Boiler House would provide a link in the anticipated Riverwalk II through an exterior sculpture garden.



Plan of residential rehab at Picker House and Riverwalk extension through the Boiler House

Figure 6.1: Downtown Lowell Urban Design Map

